

REPORT OF THE CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD
on the
Investigation of an Accident Involving Aircraft
During a Local Pleasure Flight

John William Thies and his wife were seriously injured in an accident which occurred on a ranch approximately 18 miles northwest of Ogallala, Nebraska, about 11 40 a.m. on August 1, 1943. Thies held a private pilot certificate with a single-engine land, 0-80 h.p. rating. He had flown approximately 200 solo hours, all in the type of airplane involved. Mrs. Thies was not certificated as a pilot. The aircraft, an Aeronca KCA, NC 21067, powered by a Continental 50 h.p. engine and owned by the pilot, was demolished.

Pilot Thies and his wife took off from the Ogallala Municipal Airport about 11:30 a.m. on a local pleasure flight. About ten minutes later they were observed in the vicinity of their ranch and that of a neighboring rancher, northwest of Ogallala. One witness stated that she heard an airplane approaching from the north and as it passed over her at an altitude of approximately 500 feet she recognized it as belonging to John Thies, a neighbor rancher. The pilot continued his southerly course for about 500 yards, then made a vertical bank to the right, during which he stalled the plane. It fell off, made one turn of a spin and crashed, coming to rest in an inverted position in a creek with the engine submerged in three feet of water.

There was no evidence of failure of any part of the aircraft prior to the accident and the manner in which the propeller was broken indicated that full power was being developed at the time of impact. The weather was clear and calm with a temperature of 97°. It appears quite probable that the pilot, in making a vertical bank, failed to take into consideration the following factors which might have contributed to his faulty piloting technique: The low horse power plane was fully laden (Thies and his passenger each weighed approximately 175 pounds and the plane had been fueled to capacity just prior to take-off) and was being flown over terrain 3500 feet above sea level, which, together with the high temperature, would tend to cause the aircraft to stall rather easily.

The probable cause of this accident was poor piloting technique on the part of Thies in stalling the aircraft while maneuvering at a low altitude.

BY THE BOARD

/s/ Fred A. Toombs
Secretary